

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 587

By Overbey

A RESOLUTION to congratulate the Seymour High School Forensics Team upon winning top prize at the Carson-Newman Invitational.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly is pleased to recognize those outstanding and gifted students of our State who bring honor to Tennessee as members of high school academic teams and act as ambassadors for our State through successful academic competition; and

WHEREAS, the Forensics Team of Seymour High School recently won top prize at the Carson-Newman Invitational held on February 27 and 28, 2009, at the Garden Plaza Hotel in Gatlinburg; the win marked the first time the Seymour High School team has taken home the coveted award; and

WHEREAS, under the astute guidance of Coach Danielle Smallwood, the team competed against forty teams, eighty participants in total, from four states including Tennessee, Alabama, South Carolina, and Kentucky; and

WHEREAS, Seymour's team walked away victorious, with the debate team of Ashley Harvey and Paige Taylor garnering the first place trophy for their performance in the Public Forum category; Ms. Taylor placed third overall in the category; and

WHEREAS, looking back at the heated competition, Ms. Harvey described the invitational as "one of the most stressful tournaments" the team has ever taken on, and she said the team's hard work definitely paid off; and

WHEREAS, in addition, the team of Nathan Johnston and Andrew Turner qualified for the quarter finals; Mr. Johnston, a seasoned debater, was awarded first place for Overall Speaker Points in the Public Forum category, and Mr. Turner earned a sixth place slot in the same category; and

WHEREAS, in the category of Extemporaneous Speaking, Andrew Turner made the semi-finals while Nathan Johnston qualified for the finals and came in third place overall; in the category of Impromptu, Mr. Johnston went to the semi-finals, and he advanced to the quarter-finals in the Storytelling competition; and

WHEREAS, as a whole, the Seymour High School team was the overall winning team in Public Forum, boasting the highest number of total speaker points and bringing great pride to Seymour High School for outstanding performance amid such steep competition; and

WHEREAS, Seymour High School also took the first place Debate Sweepstakes Award for winning more debates than any other team in the invitational; speaking to this incredible honor, Coach Smallwood, who has coached the team for nine years, said, "I have never been so proud in my entire life"; and

WHEREAS, the top three teams from Seymour High School, including Nathan Johnston and Andrew Turner; Paige Taylor and Ashley Harvey; and the brother-sister team of Matt and Angela Karl, went on to compete for a spot at Nationals, traveling to Nashville to compete at Brentwood High School at the National Forensics League Qualifiers; and

WHEREAS, the other members of the championship Seymour High School Forensics Team who helped win the top prize included Maria Delucia, Cara Monghi, Kayla Clabo, D.J. Young, Hannah Hayes, and Kevin Nickens; and

WHEREAS, because of his great success at the state level, Nathan Johnston will compete on June 14, 2009, as one of two students representing the State of Tennessee at the National Forensic League's National Debate Championship in Birmingham, Alabama; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnston, a senior, began his debate career as a sophomore when his friends convinced him to try his hand at it; at first, he participated in the acting category, gaining stage experience and a knack for storytelling that has proven invaluable to him as he has advanced to the national tournament, during which he will compete in the Student Congress category; and

WHEREAS, Nathan says the goal of Student Congress is to impress not only the judges but also his peers; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnston's teammate Andrew Turner was named second runner-up for the national championship, and he will be traveling with his teammate, helping him prepare for the competition, studying and debating the mock legislation to help his friend and to prepare himself in case Nathan or the other Tennessee representative are unable to compete; in this case, Mr. Turner will step up and compete in their stead; and

WHEREAS, Nathan Johnston and Andrew Turner are the first students in Seymour High School history to have earned their respective titles at the state competition, and they are enthusiastic about their upcoming competition; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Seymour High School Forensics Team demonstrated extraordinary intellect and poise during the Carson-Newman Invitational, bringing great pride to their families, their school, and the citizens of this great State; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to honor and congratulate these exemplary students on their many accomplishments; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby commend and honor the members of the Seymour High School Forensics Team and extend to each of the members of this select group our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we wish Nathan Johnston the best of luck at the National Forensic League's National Debate Championship.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation to each person named above, with this final clause omitted from such copies.